

REMARKS

Claims 1-13, were pending before the examiner. The examiner has rejected all of the claims.

Numerous phone consultations were held with the examiner from April 8 to April 10, concerning the reference cited in the above identified Office Action. The discussion related to the Communications Week article and what it was able to enable. Applicant raised the issue on the two copyright dates indicating that it was impossible to confirm when any portion of the article was written. The examiner dismissed this concern. No resolution on the copyright date was accepted by either party.

The discussion also related to the standards of the industry on the date of the article. Applicant stated that the only true way that information was passed over the Internet at the time of the article was via e-mail. The examiner accepted this fact. Applicant then argued that those of "ordinary skill in the art" at the time of article (the earliest date available) would not contemplate or be able to withdraw information within an e-mail for use elsewhere. Applicant argued that even today, extrapolating a sixteen digit number (a credit card number) from an e-mail is extremely difficult due to the many ways (blanks, dashes, or a continuous number) together with the placement of the number within the e-mail; and that the way information was handled at the time was through an intermediate human who extracted the information from an e-mail.

The examiner did not commit either way on this proposition. Subsequently a FAX was sent to the examiner containing language which clearly establishes that this operation is done in an "automatic" fashion without any human intervention. The examiner and applicant have not had a chance to discuss this FAX.

No final resolution to the interviews was obtained.

The acceptance of the drawings filed earlier is noted.

The examiner has objected to the specification stating that the continuing data found on page 1 must be updated.

As of this date, this data appears to be complete. If there is an error, the examiner's assistance is requested to correct the specification.

The examiner has rejected claims 1-13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) citing the Communications Week article. The examiner states,

“... the Communications week article discloses in January 1996 that it was known to in on-line commerce to use a credit intermediary. The credit intermediary uses customer account information, for example credit information, that has been received from an first remote computer that us an user via a network to obtain an authorization indicia, for example an approval number. After the authorization indicia has been received, the authorization indicia is passed on to the merchant via a network so as to indicate that payment has been made for an item being purchased.”

As noted earlier, this reference has been discussed by phone interview with the examiner. In that interview, the examiner agreed that the technique of the time was to use phone and e-mail as the methodology of communications.

The very reference that the examiner is using supports this type of communication when it discusses the current state of the art:

“... an on-line customer types in his or her credit card number or phones it into the merchant, often using a toll-free telephone number.” (Page 2, lines 1-2, underline added)

The article deals with the sole issue of “security” (“For a commercial user, ... And security is its biggest concern.”, lines 1-2 of the article; “... About half of all credit card fraud is initiated by the merchant”, page 2, line 3). To satisfy the security concerns, the article plugs an intermediary into the process which:

“...intermediaries take the credit card information, secure the authorization from the credit card issuer and pass that verification along to the merchant. That way, the merchant never has the credit card number itself.” (Page 2, lines 4-6)

The reference’s own brevity makes the article easily mis-interpreted by the examiner now that the invention is fully known. The examiner though must look at the state of the art and ability at the time of the reference.

It is clear from the reference’s description of how the “merchant” handles the transaction that there is a human operator who receives the information “from the phone” or via an e-mail. Accurately and automatically

extrapolating a sixteen digit number with expiration date from an e-mail is a daunting task which is not even done today, much less at the dawn of the Internet. At the time, the human operator was the only accurate method of obtaining the credit card number and its expiration date.

As example, a human can easily recognize all of the following numbers as being the same, but a computer would have extreme difficulty:

1234 5678 9123 4567	exp 01/05	1234-5678-9123-4567	exp 01/05
1234 5678 9123 4567	exp 1/05	1234-5678-9123-4567	exp 1/05
1234 5678 9123 4567	exp 01/5	1234/5678/9123/4567	exp 01/5
1234 5678 9123 4567	exp 01-05	1234/5678/9123/4567	exp 01/05
1234 5678 9123 4567	exp 1-05	1234/5678/9123/4567	exp 1/05
1234 5678 9123 4567	exp 01-5	1234/5678/91234567	exp 01/5

The possibilities are endless. (Not even considering is there one space or two spaces or three spaces between the numbers).

This fact was made clear when an implementation of an embodiment of the invention was described to a banker in the field of credit card processing. At one point the implementation was described as being totally automatic without any people and the banker observed, "you mean except for the ladies taking the number on the phone."

Further, common sense indicates that if the "intermediary" was operating "without human intervention", as the examiner suggest, then the intermediary could easily take the information from the Net; but, the Intermediary seems (according to the examiner) to create parallel systems for the task (one by phone and the other automatic). This does not make economic sense.

As stated earlier, it is the brevity of the article that permits any possibility to be "read into" the article after the situation is known, yet there is no supporting information to fill in the article's many holes with facts. Would this article be able to "teach or suggest" something that even when read now eludes "one of ordinary skill in the art"?

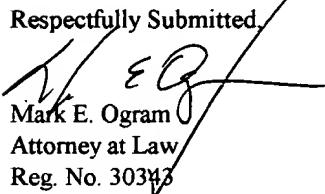
Clearly not.

Independent claims 1, 6, and 11, by this amendment have been amended to include language which clearly shows that the present invention works "without human intervention" and "automatically".

It is respectfully submitted that claims 1-13, as now amended, are not taught or suggested by the Communications Week article.

Based upon the above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-13, as now amended, are allowable and should be advanced to issuance.

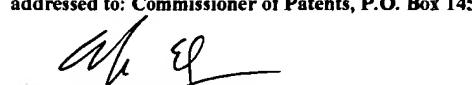
Respectfully Submitted,

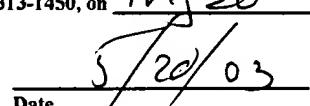

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING (37 CFR 1.8)

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on May 20, 2003.


Mark Ogram (reg. No. 30343)


Date 5/20/03